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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY USSR

REPORT

SUBJECT

Current Political
Situation in the USSR

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four-page report

on the current political situation in the

USSR

reasons for, and implications of, the
recent changes in top Soviet leadership and
rumors of a military coup being planned in connection with the June crisis.

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The Soviet Union

The Political Situation

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[redacted] Khrushchev [redacted] is of course a primitive individual from the intellectual point of view, a demagogue and political jobber, unreliable and dishonest, and without imagination. Such men are often ruthless, ferocious and at the same time sentimental. A sickening type [redacted]

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Concerning the political consequences of the June events in the Kremlin [redacted] New times, new men. Everybody has had enough of the old Bolsheviks. No one believes in them any more or puts faith in their promises. They play no role whether it be Khrushchev, Malenkov or Molotov.* Of the old Bolsheviks only Mikoyan is fairly popular, but he is shrewd and people know very little concerning what he really does. Among the new members of the Presidium, the majority are less well known, except perhaps Brezhnev and Kozlov, especially the last named. Men from Leningrad are not like the men from Moscow, but in Leningrad the level is higher.

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[redacted] the Army now plays a large role behind all Party conflict. [redacted]

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[redacted] Zhukov is underrated and [redacted] is not at all a military bureaucrat or disciplined professional man. Zhukov has much political imagination, he is intelligent and youthful despite his age. The Army in general disposes of many first-class brains.

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In [redacted] Beria's liquidation [redacted] the military had played a decisive role therein. [redacted] this is generally believed in the Soviet Union. Certainly, Sokolovsky had a special accounting to settle with Beria since the war. [redacted]

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Concerning the so-called de-Stalinization program [redacted] the 20th Congress in the Party history can be compared with events in church history when Luther nailed his theses to the cathedral door. After a week it was as much a crime to be Stalinist as previously it had been a merit. Such a miracle Khrushchev was able to achieve only because the masses felt that way. It was a blow for orthodox Communism which had been able to stand up against the test of life. Concerning Molotov and the others, one can say not that they are so much Stalinist now but that they are the men who fear the consequences of de-Stalinization. The most important of these consequences is that honest men are now gaining increasing influence since Beria's terror disappeared. No State can any longer maintain itself by villains as was the case in Stalin's time. Have these honest men also more influence now even within the Party? Unfortunately, that cannot be said [redacted] because that depends on Khrushchev, who hates all intellectuals (the intelligentsia), all educated and qualified people, all respectable people in the usual sense of the word. There is no possibility of his working with such people, because he hates them and fears them and at the same time entertains tremendous contempt for them.

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[redacted] there are not many who believe in Khrushchev's future [redacted] When one attains such heights as Khrushchev, with such a ~~such~~ a past and by means of such methods, it is probable that he will wind up directly in Lubyanka's dungeon, and that will come with a crash. Will it be easy to replace him? There are no irreplaceable men especially now in the Soviet Union, [redacted]

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[redacted] rumors a military coup had been planned in connection with the June crisis. [redacted] it was not at all impossible, that something like that really happened. The Presidium usually meets in Stalin's villa forty kilometers from Moscow. If Marshal Zhukov was there it is clear that in his vicinity there must be some professional officers, adjutants, etc. These had at their disposition associations and means to enable them to influence the development of the situation. [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted] it is hardly likely that Molotov and his group stood up against Khrushchev without assuring themselves support in the form of real strength behind them. Such a game is not usually begun in the Party without sufficient trumps in hand. [redacted] it is more likely that it was Marshal Zhukov himself that provoked the Molotov group by first promising them support and then betraying them to take Khrushchev's side. Zhukov is a much better player and tactician than people in general realize. He had, moreover, the accounts to settle up with Molotov and Kazanovich. [redacted] such things discussed privately in every day life [redacted] now after the 22nd Congress the atmosphere is such that one is no longer afraid to talk with people whom one knows well. [redacted] conversation concerning the crisis in the Presidium [redacted] at present wholly between four walls. [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet foreign policy [redacted] has been for so long carried on by qualified professionals, specialists in their field, and whose orientation is determined by the Communist doctrine. The Soviet Union's foreign policy is the work of many qualified men and a personnel change in the Party Presidium cannot mean very much under present circumstances. That was another thing in Stalin's time. Concerning internal policy, especially economics, it is otherwise [redacted] There are no longer any reasonable people in the Soviet Union who believe that living standards can be raised without fundamental reforms in the whole system, first and foremost in agriculture. [redacted] "economy" [redacted] means industry.) Khrushchev took charge of the Industrial District Boards** and furnished them with his own supporters. Highly qualified technical people are badly treated and appointed to unsuitable positions without respect to their practical experience. Good engineers and industrial leaders are placed under incompetent, diletante Party men. Such dilletantes are often very gifted, energetic and active, and it is precisely activity which constitutes the greatest virtue in Khrushchev's eyes. It is not necessary to be oneself an economic leader to understand how all this is going to end. [redacted] intelligentsia understands that Khrushchev's policy betokens economic deterioration rather than improvement.

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Footnotes: *The Moscow garrison is commanded by Maj. Gen. I. S. Kolesnikov
 **The correct term is National Economic Councils (Sovnar Khozy)

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[redacted] when people learned what happened on the 4th of June, hoarding began immediately in Kiev. [redacted] people, at least in the Ukraine, have no confidence in Khrushchev. On the contrary, people believe in Zhukov, and possibly in Mikoyan despite the fact that he is Armenian [redacted] intelligentsia cannot blindly trust in any one, not even in Zhukov.

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[redacted] the government can make life not worth living for human beings in another way, by diminishing bread loaves and aggravating working conditions.

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[redacted] it is absolutely true that the Russian people in their entirety will not have war. In the event of war the present attitude is worse than in 1939. It is not only the masses who will not listen to talk of war, but even the intelligentsia, and so widely spread is this attitude that it is even shared by the higher officers' corps.

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[redacted] ambitious Party men can arrange a crisis in foreign politics which can lead to war. Youth is more afraid of war than older people. Youth, especially educated students, etc., have already sufficiently formed a conception of atom and nuclear war despite the fact that such things are never talked about from official circles.

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